



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Number of New Melanoma Cases in Eau Claire County has almost tripled since the 1990s

July is UV Awareness Month

Eau Claire, WI – July 13, 2015 -As the summer months heat up and outdoor activities abound, remember to protect yourself from harmful UV Rays! In Eau Claire County, the number of new melanoma cases has almost tripled since the 1990s according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. From 1995-1999, there were 40 cases of melanoma in Eau Claire County compared to 116 cases of melanoma from 2008-2012. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S., and melanoma is the most deadly type of skin cancer.

More than 90 percent of melanoma skin cancers are due to skin cell damage from ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure. Ultra Violet Radiation that we are exposed to comes in two forms: ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB). Both kinds of rays can cause skin cancer. The harmful ultraviolet rays from both the sun and indoor tanning “sunlamps” can cause many other complications besides skin cancer such as eye problems, a weakened immune system, age spots, wrinkles, and leathery skin.

“Without skin cancer prevention efforts, melanoma rates will continue to climb,” says Shane Sanderson, Environmental Health Director. Below are simple, everyday steps you can take to safeguard your skin from the harmful effects of UV radiation from the sun.



Wear Sunscreen

Generously apply broad-spectrum sunscreen to cover all exposed skin. The “broad spectrum” variety protects against overexposure to both UVA and UVB rays. The FDA recommends using sunscreens that are not only broad spectrum, but that also have a sun protection factor (SPF) value of at least 15 for protection against sun-induced skin problems.

Go for the Shade

Stay out of the sun, if possible, between the peak burning hours, which are between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). You can head for the shade, or make your own shade with protective clothing such as a broad-brimmed hat, long sleeved shirt, and long pants.



Protect Your Eyes

UV radiation can damage your eyes as well as your skin. The sun's UV rays can burn the cornea of your eyes, which can result in cataracts that may ultimately cause blindness. It is best to wear wraparound sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection.

For more information on UV exposure and safety visit www.foh.hhs.gov/Calendar/july.html or contact the Eau Claire City-County Health Department at 715-839-4718.

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